Emerging Mobile Technology in the Food Remitting Process: Evidence from Zimbabwean Migrants in Cape Town, South Africa

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In the last decade, sending remittances through mobile means has increased globally. Most notable is that the utilization of mobile usage has grown in the global south and this has enabled easy access to remitting money from the place of destination to the place of origin. However, the focus of the growing body of literature on mobile remittances has focused mostly on cash remittances. Little attention has been shown to do a methodological and in-depth analysis of mobile food remitting. The focus of studies on remittances have also focused predominantly on cash remittances or define remittances primarily in terms of cash remittances. Yet the general definition of remittances includes remittances both in cash and in-kind, including food. This study focused on the research gap of mobile food remitting in the context of Zimbabwean migrants in Cape Town.

The objectives of this paper are four-fold intending to explore the role of mobile technology and big data in the food remitting process for Zimbabwean migrants; examine the role of mobile tools as facilitators in the channels used by Zimbabweans to remit food back home; investigate the effects of mobile technology in the trends and patterns of remitting food by Zimbabwean migrants and finally to identify the challenges that Zimbabweans confront when food remitting and find out how mobile technology assist to deal with the problems

This research used the quantitative research method. Primary data on 100 Zimbabwean migrants in Cape Town was utilized through a structured questionnaire. Participants in the research were identified through nonprobability sampling, to be explicit, snowballing sampling was applied. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. The paper will discuss the major finding which demonstrates how mobile food remitting is growing and most Zimbabwean migrants in the study use mobile technology to send food back home. The mobile tools used to send food back home play an important role as an initiator and easy access enabler of food remitting. Most migrants in the study use mobile tools to send food back home whenever possible, especially in times of crisis when it is difficult to remit food back home. The notable challenge in the study is the problem of access to both informal or formal ways of sending food back home like cars, buses and other means. This is where mobile food remitting is key where a transaction on a mobile phone is used to remit food. For example, the use of the Malaicha mobile application, which is a food remitting application.

The paper argues that that food remittances are showing how essential they are to migrants and their families as mobile tools become beneficial in overcoming the challenges faced by migrants when they are remitting food. he main limitation is that not all migrants have access to a mobile phone, especially smartphones that would help them to access food remitting applications. Mobile technology has a developmental effect on the food remitting process

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